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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KMPI](#) [TS](#)
SUBJECT: EU PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION ON LACK OF HUMAN RIGHTS
PROGRESS IN TUNISIA

REF: A. TUNIS 1390

[1](#)B. TUNIS 1425
[1](#)C. TUNIS 730
[1](#)D. [HTTP://WWW.EUROPARL.EUROPA.EU/](http://WWW.EUROPARL.EUROPA.EU/)

Classified By: Ambassador William Hudson for Reasons 1.4 b & d

[1](#)1. (C//NF) Summary: A June 15 resolution by the European Parliament noted continuing concern about the human rights situation in Tunisia in light of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement and numerous discussions tying a strong EU-Tunisia relationship to the promotion of human rights and democracy. European colleagues in Tunis describe increasing EU frustration and resentment over the GOT's heavy-handed tactics in dealing with civil society and continued blockage of EU funding for democracy and human rights initiatives in Tunisia. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C//NF) On June 15, the European Parliament passed an expansive and strongly worded resolution on human rights in Tunisia, recalling the role of human rights and democracy in previous EU-Tunisia agreements and communications, regretting "the fact that the situation as regards freedoms and human rights in Tunisia is still a cause for concern" and calling on the Tunisian authorities to "fulfill their international commitments." The resolution specifically calls on the GOT to provide explanations for the ban on the Congress of the LTDH (Ref B), to unblock European funding for civil society projects in Tunisia, and to release jailed lawyer/activist Mohamed Abbou (Ref C). The resolution requests several steps be taken by the European Council and the European Commission to promote human rights in Tunisia and notes, "the implementation of the current reforms must be regarded as a priority in the partnership between the EU and Tunisia and must constitute a fundamental element of the harmonious development of relations between the EU and Tunisia." (See Ref D for full text of resolution).

[1](#)3. (C//NF) In a June 20 meeting with DCM and Poloff, European Commission Chief of Operations Giacomo Durazzo and Political Chief Bernard Philippe said the EU Parliament resolution was indicative of growing EU frustration with Tunisia's human rights record and unwillingness to reform. Durazzo said that Tunisia was increasingly thought of in Brussels as a country "that doesn't want to do business with us", as opposed to more reform oriented regional countries such as Morocco. Durazzo and Philippe said Tunisian Parliamentarians and pro-GOT organizations sent twenty faxes and letters denouncing the resolution, and defending Tunisia's record of cooperation with the EU. According to Philippe several Tunisian Parliamentarians had traveled to Brussels to perform damage control with their EU counterparts. Although Durazzo and Philippe had no specific plan of action for next steps, a EU press release of June 16 expressing concern at the

blocking of the LTDH congress notes: "the European Union expects that the EU-Tunisia sub-committee on human rights and democratization will be established as soon as possible and that Tunisia will respond favorably to the proposals in this regard."

14. (C//NF) Comment: It is increasingly apparent that the EU Parliament is fed up with GOT attempts to squelch any kind of criticism and stifle EU programs that seek any influence beyond providing the GOT with money, equipment, and materials -- Durazzo described a 22 million Euro judicial assistance program as "a mistake" due to GOT efforts to control usage of program funds. In past years divisions within the EU have resulted in at best, tepid enthusiasm, and at worst, inaction on human rights and reform issues in Tunisia, since strong bilateral partners such as France and Italy have been reluctant to push the GOT on human rights. Recent moves by EU bodies such as the Parliament resolution and related public statements show the tide may be turning -- at least temporarily. At the same time, EC representatives in Tunis have been increasingly forward in reaching out to Embassy for coordination efforts (Ref a). End Comment.

HUDSON